

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKO #5002/01 2990051  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 260051Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8955  
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 005002

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

H FOR JENNIFER CHARTRAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/26/2017  
TAGS: PGOV PREL OREP MARR JA  
SUBJECT: SENATOR DANIEL INOUYE'S MEETINGS WITH JAPANESE  
LEGISLATORS

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, Reasons 1.4 B/D

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) met October 9 and 10 with senior Japanese Diet members. Senator Inouye told his interlocutors the U.S. Senate is working to pass a resolution to form a U.S.-Japan interparliamentary forum, which would be the official means of communication between the U.S. Congress and the Diet. The Senator also underscored the importance of strong communication between U.S. and Japanese lawmakers and hoped that this would help minimize misunderstandings between the two sides. Senator Inouye thanked Japanese leaders for recent contributions to tsunami relief, Six-Party Talks, and U.S. troop realignment. A number of lawmakers expressed concerns about instability in Northeast Asia and possible difficulties in China. End Summary.

-----  
Lower House Speaker Yohei Kono  
-----

¶2. (SBU) Senator Inouye told Diet Lower House Speaker Yohei Kono he expected a resolution in the Senate on formation of a U.S.-Japan interparliamentary forum to pass very soon. Once the group is formed, it would be the official, bi-partisan channel between Congress and the Diet. Highlighting recent tensions over the comfort women resolution in Congress, Inouye said that establishing an official relationship between legislative peers would hopefully help improve communication between Japan and the United States on difficult issues. The Senator added that a strong relationship between lawmakers would also help show the U.S. commitment to security in Northeast Asia. Kono agreed that it is important to establish and nurture a strong bilateral relationship at the lawmaker level and highlighted that most of the work on establishing the Japanese side of the interparliamentary group is complete. He said he looks forward to working with Senator Inouye and added that with recent and (likely) future political change in Japan and the United States, it would be essential to have a good, official relationship that bridges any changes in participants.

-----  
Liberal Democratic Party Representative Taro Aso  
-----

¶3. (SBU) Highlighting the pending establishment of the U.S.-Japan interparliamentary group, Senator Inouye told veteran Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Lower House Representative Taro Aso this indicated the strong interest by the leaders of Congress in maintaining good relations with their Japanese counterparts. Inouye noted the U.S.-Japan Alliance is of primary importance to the United States and added that the Asia-Pacific region is critical to the future

of both countries. Inouye thanked Aso for recent Japanese contributions in the aftermath of the tsunami, assistance in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), participation in the Six Party Talks, and support for the Okinawa troop realignment.

¶4. (C) Aso registered his growing concerns over the economic and political situation in China. Wondering how long China would be able to continue its current economic expansion, Aso said it is worrying that an increasing number of wealthy Chinese are keeping their assets in yen, dollar, and euro-denominated investments. He further commented that significant levels of corruption in both China and Taiwan is also a bad sign of potential instability to come. The stability of the Taiwan Strait is of critical importance to Japan, Aso added.

-----  
LDP Representative Taro Nakayama  
-----

¶5. (SBU) Discussing the interparliamentary forum, Senator Inouye told senior LDP representative Taro Nakayama that there is often misunderstanding of Japan in Congress and said that better legislative contacts should help this situation improve. Drawing a contrast between the U.S. relationship with the UK, which he described as a "natural" one, Senator Inouye noted the U.S-Japan relationship takes "work and effort" to be effective.

¶6. (C) The situation in Northeast Asia is at a critical turning point, especially with the DPRK and South Korea moving toward peace, Nakayama said. If the Six Party Talks are successful, Nakayama opined, it would have an impact on the balance of power in the region, likely to China's benefit. Given this, Nakayama agreed that having strong communication links between Congress and the Diet would be

important. Turning to domestic politics, Nakayama noted that he currently chairs a committee in the Diet that is looking at Japanese constitutional revision. The current constitution is no longer appropriate for modern day realities in Japan, and a parliamentary working group would review possibilities for change during the coming three years, Nakayama added.

-----  
Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa  
-----

¶7. (SBU) In a brief, business-like call on Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, Senator Inouye emphasized the importance of continued strong relations between the United States and Japan. Northeast Asia is of particular significance to the future of the United States, and a strong relationship at the legislator level is an important underpinning to the U.S.-Japan alliance, Inouye said. Anticipating a potential period of political uncertainty in the United States in the coming election year, Inouye underlined the importance of the interparliamentary forum.

¶8. (SBU) Ozawa agreed that the interparliamentary group would be important for the U.S.-Japan Alliance. He added that Japan is also facing a period of political instability driven by factors not recognized by the general public, including growing income level gaps between the regions and the major cities. Turning to international issues, Ozawa said he believes the biggest issue for the global community in the coming years would be possible instability in China. Noting that political turmoil and economic collapse in China would have dire global consequences, Ozawa said the United States should take the lead to ensure that any upheaval in China would have a "soft landing."

¶9. (SBU) Inouye concurred that China's economic and military growth is of concern to the United States. He added that the United States is also focused on the recent cases of lead in toys and contamination of food products sourced in China.

Noting that U.S. toy companies procure the vast majority of their products from China, the Senator said the coming Christmas season could have a strong negative impact on U.S. companies if consumers decide to avoid purchasing products made in China.

SCHIEFFER